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RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK IMMEDIATE 0155
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE IMMEDIATE
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 1910
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0363
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 1569
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 1195
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 8084
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 4991
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT IMMEDIATE 0189
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI IMMEDIATE 0090
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 004661

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SUBJECT: JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER TO VISIT KAZAKHSTAN AND
UZBEKISTAN

Classified By: ACTING POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR CAROL T. REYNOLDS FO
R REASONS 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: MOFA confirmed August 16 that Prime Minister Koizumi will visit Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan August 28-30, 2006. The trip is intended to build upon the "Central Asia Plus Japan" Foreign Ministers meeting held June 2006 in Tokyo. No new assistance packages are contemplated. MOFA advised that Japan shares the concerns of the international community regarding democratization and human rights in Uzbekistan and that the Prime Minister will discuss these concerns frankly with President Karimov. MOFA will publicly announce the visit on August 17 but wanted to provide advance notice to the U.S. and E.U. END SUMMARY.

VISIT TO TAKE PLACE AUGUST 28-30

¶2. (C) MOFA Central Asia and Caucasus Division Director Hideki Uyama requested an appointment with PolOff August 16 to provide advance notice that Prime Minister Koizumi will visit Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on August 28-30. The possibility of such a visit has been mentioned in the press for the past few weeks, but MOFA had refused until now to confirm it. Uyama said that an official announcement would be released on August 17 but that MOFA wanted to give the United States and the E.U. advance notice.

¶3. (C) While the final details have yet to be settled upon, Uyama advised, the outline of the trip is as follows. The PM will arrive in Kazakhstan on August 28, will meet with President Nazarbayev and remain overnight. On August 29 he will fly to Uzbekistan for a meeting with President Karimov and again will spend the night. He will depart Tashkent the evening of August 30 and return to Tokyo in the early morning hours of August 31. In addition to the Prime Minister, the highest level official to accompany will be Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiji Suzuki. No other ministers will participate.

CENTRAL ASIA IMPORTANT TO JAPAN

14. (C) The purpose of the trip, which will be the first ever by a Japanese Prime Minister to Central Asia, is to follow up on last June's second Foreign Ministers meeting of the "Central Asia Plus Japan" group, Uyama explained. During that meeting an action plan was produced; this visit will reinforce Japan's commitment to Central Asia. Tokyo considers Central Asia to be a critical region for geopolitical/strategic reasons and also because of its vast energy resources. Japan has consequently sought to enhance both bilateral and multilateral relations with the countries of the region. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were selected for the visit because Tokyo views them as the two major players in the Central Asia region.

KOIZUMI TO PRESS KARIMOV

15. (C) With regard to Uzbekistan, Uyama noted that Japan is aware of and shares the concerns of the international community concerning the country's slow pace of democratization and poor human rights record, particularly the Andijan incident of May 2005. Japan uses every opportunity, including meetings at the Foreign Minister level, to share these concerns with the Uzbeks and to urge them to alter their conduct. Accordingly, during his visit Koizumi intends to convey directly to President Karimov the concerns of the international community and will urge him to do more to foster democratization and to strengthen human

TOKYO 00004661 002 OF 002

rights protections. Uyama stated that even though Uzbekistan has a problematic record, Japan still believes it is important to maintain a constructive dialogue and is fearful that if Tashkent's relations with the U.S., E.U., and Japan were to sour, Russia and China would be the beneficiaries. Uyama promised to provide a full readout of the PM's meetings once the visit has been concluded.

NO NEW ASSISTANCE TO BE ANNOUNCED

16. (C) Uyama said Japan has no plans to announce new assistance programs during the visit. Kazakhstan is too wealthy to qualify for either yen loans or direct grants, so the only possible assistance Tokyo could render would be to send technical experts or to host Kazakhs for training through Japan's JICA program. No such exchanges will be announced during the visit. Concerning Uzbekistan, Japan is already providing yen loans to support two projects -- improvements to an electrical power plant in Tashkent, and the construction of a railway in the southern part of the country. These projects are ongoing and will continue. Although Japan is considering offering loans to assist several small health care projects, a final decision has not been made. No new assistance will be announced during the visit. Uymama said.

COMMENT

17. (C) Koizumi's visit to Central Asia less than a month before he leaves office is intended to highlight Japan's interest in playing a key role in the region.
SCHIEFFER